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Seapower and Military Strategy Today

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SEAPOWER AND MILITARY STRATEGY TODAY

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Admiral McCormick, Gentlemen of the Naval War College:

At this Christmas season those of us who can get out from under the pressures of shopping, or of term papers, turn our eyes to the East. The spectacle there, if not a very cheerful one, at least demonstrates the continuity of history. Once again the Israelites are bickering with the neighboring tribes. Once again there has been a flight into Egypt, conducted this time, however, by Czechoslovakian jets. Much changes but much remains the same, and this too we may say of seapower, something which has been important to survival ever since a distinguished naval architect called Noah built himself an ark of gopher wood. But all this is far in the past, and our concern at the moment is with the problem of seapower today.

The trouble with talking about seapower is that it is so difficult to say just what it is. The gentleman who first used the term as an abstraction to describe a complex of forces of great historical influence never defined it. This was perhaps wisdom on his part. If you have a good phrase, with a manifest but undefined relation to reality, it is probably best to leave it a little vague and so acquire the support of many who might take exception to a too precise formulation. In the management of men there is something to be said for Napoleon's statement that if an obscurity did not exist it might be well to invent one. But for the formulation of serious policy in serious times it is desirable that content be reasonably clear, certainly to the experts and if possible also to lecturers.

Yet we must note that Mahan's purpose in choosing the phrase, that of striking the imagination of his readers, was amply fulfilled. He used it, he said, deliberately, "in order to compel attention," and *The Influence of Seapower on History* became one of the few really important do-it-yourself books of modern times. Here, in the possession of a battle line, was the key to national greatness. Armed with the lessons of history the navalists and ironmasters of the world united in seeing to it that their countries were not deprived of this essential instrument for gaining a place in the sun. The Germans built battleships, as did the Americans. The Japanese bought them, as on a smaller scale did the Greeks and the Argentines.

However much one may deplore armament races, it can be argued that this one was helpful in at least one sense: it clarified the real distribution of force in the industrialized international community. So far as the United States was concerned, for example, it put an end to such awkward situations as the Chilean crisis of 1892 in which the imbalance of naval forces led to West Coast terror of the Chilean fleet, and in which our grave naval inferiority was for a time redressed only by our fortuitous possession of an impressive secret weapon in the gifted profanity of Fighting Bob Evans. If the influence of Mahan on history shows that the pen is mightier than the sword, that of Evans at Valparaiso demonstrates the occasional virtue of words the pen dares not commit to paper.

The educational impact of the writings of Mahan were indubitably immense. Once the scales had fallen from their eyes the various states of the world attempted to wrest the trident from Great Britain, or at least to run away with a piece of it, by following what was understood to be the British example. Similarly flattering imitation was accorded Mahan himself, for as military technology advanced others attempted to avail themselves of the emotive value of his terminology. Where once seapower

was all, new growths proliferated. In the process of this justification by terminology, we found ourselves afflicted with landpower, and airpower, and firepower.

To the student of the history of science, this attribution of dynamic virtue to inert elements raises a horrid possibility. Long ago Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece, postulated that all is water. We may consider him the Mahan of physics. But by the time of Aristotle, this agreeably simple concept had been outmoded and the elements had become four: earth, air, fire, and water. Today, things are still worse, and on the walls of offices of harassed government servants hang periodic tables of elements far outnumbering four. One shudders to think of the possibility of a similar fragmentation of the concepts of the elements of military force. Still, things could be worse: at least this is not yet the Water War College.

The trouble is, I think, that these terms are essentially meaningless. The reason they are so slippery is that in their construction the concept of power is compounded not with its source, or even with its purpose, but with the element in which it is exercised. Firepower we can manage fairly easily: this term is a little different from the others, and can be defined in familiar and friendly units such as rounds, or footpounds, or megatons. But who has ever seen land exert power? Seapower we might have had at Passamaguoddy if only the Congress had gone along. Airpower turns windmills, and is useful in oratory, but that is not what General Mitchell had in mind.

Now all this semantic skirmishing is not to be taken to indicate that one cannot talk meaningfully about these things. I realize that I am here to praise Caesar, not to bury him. There is no reason why the term "seapower" should not mean anything we choose. Like Humpty Dumpty we are, or ought to be, the masters, and can freight these counters with our own ideas in the same way that we can freight an algebraic symbol. But it is desirable to know the value of X, and if we cannot find it from

Mahan we had best look elsewhere. And, for choice, we should begin with something fairly simple and manageable.

Such a definition we can take from the writings of Admiral Richmond, one of the gifted British commentators on these matters. Seapower, he says, is that form of national strength which permits one to send his armies and commerce across such stretches of ocean as may seem desirable, and to prevent his enemy from doing the same. In its material sense it is composed of three things: of fighting strength, of suitable positions where this strength can be nourished and whence it can be projected, and of vehicles of transport. Simplified, this means navies, bases, and shipping. There are certain objections to this definition, and certain modifications which seem in order, some of which we will come to, but for the moment perhaps this will do. We may note, however, that it is a much narrower definition than that implicit in Mahan's use of the term.

Now these three elements — navies, bases, and shipping — which make up the form of national strength called seapower, are passive only. They may amount to seapower, but they, and it, will not pay off by themselves. Without direction the ships will not sail, nor the bases operate; without intelligent direction the ships may sail the wrong way, and the bases perform their duties badly. Like war, in which they have traditionally been useful, these things are but the instruments of policy. We need also an intelligent system of direction, which we can call strategy.

But here, as you well know, we get involved in a circular process. For strategy must direct not only the sailing of the ships, but also their timely construction. Policy must form as well as control the instrument, and if this is not wisely done the weapons mix may prove inappropriate, or the bases inefficient, or the merchant marine inadequate. "I do not," wrote Lord North in September 1772, "recollect to have seen a more pacific appearance of affairs than there is at this moment. This is a time for a reasonable

economy. Great peace establishments will, if we do not take care, prove our ruin." The ruin came, but not as the result of great peace establishments. The Royal Navy proved inadequate to the demands made upon it, and the Battle off Ushant and the affair off the Capes of the Chesapeake cost an empire.

Thus far we have accumulated three things: the passive instruments of seapower, the intelligent control of these instruments, and their wise preplanning and provision. By this process of snowballing we are, I think, approaching what it was Mahan had in mind, but to get to it we will have to add in a few more factors: such things as commercial, and economic, and colonial policies. All these are part of an inclusive maritime strategy. All these, added to the mix, conduce to greatness in a world of competing mercantalist empires. In other words, since Britain came to the top of the heap through seapower, seapower is the sum of those things which brought Britain to the top of the heap.

This, at any rate, is what some competent critics have thought Mahan thought. But we should perhaps be a little delicate about putting words into his mouth, for the bane of great men is often the conduct of their followers. That other great educator of the 19th century, Karl Marx, showed this when late in life he somewhat sourly remarked, "Moi, je ne suis pas marxiste." Rather than attempting to tie the Admiral down, we may proceed to see if useful elements remain today in his interpretation of what now seems ancient history.

It would, of course, be surprising if there were not some changes, for change is the one great constant of history and the rate of change certainly seems to have been increasing in recent times. One of the greatest changes, and one indeed of basic importance, has been in the direction of policy of the maritime powers, in the shift from offensive to defensive. In the classic period of European overseas activity and of the wars for empire, the important use of the seas was expansionist, designed to gather in the outer world and to subject it first to European control, and then

to that of whichever European power could succeed in dominating the others. The problem was one in two parts: first, to seize the treasures of the Incas or the Moguls or whatever, and, second, by controlling the exits from Europe and some of the other narrow places of the world, to prevent citizens of the competing western rimlands from beating you at the same game.

In the two great wars of this century, however, the problem has been a very different one. Far from being concerned with the projection of European power in order to exploit the outer world, these were struggles to defend the rimlands against aggression from within the Eurasion continent. The western approaches were again a critical area, but now as the avenue for external support. The problem was one of compression rather than expansion. No longer were seapower and maritime strategy employed to remake the map of the world. Their function was essentially conservative.

Somewhat the same observation can be made for the Pacific areas, although the timing was different owing to cultural lag. Beginning in the 1890's with the Sino-Japanese war, Japan practiced what could be called an old-fashioned offensive use of seapower, an expansionist maritime strategy. This, with intermissions, she continued to do down to that December fourteen years ago when she made an unfortunate mistake. The consequence of this mistake was that the Japanese found themselves subjected to a phenomenon unique in naval history, to compression from across an ocean. The American war against Japan was certainly, from the time of Guadalcanal on, an offensive naval campaign, but in the larger old-fashioned sense it was not an offensive maritime strategy or a positive use of seapower. It put the Jap back in his box but it did not reorder the world. The Asiatic world was indeed reordered, but by others, with the result that our felt but somewhat unclearly articulated desires were not fulfilled, victory was not enough, and the Asiatic situation is still not one to give entire satisfaction to the maritime powers.

It is, however, similar in its essential elements to the strategic situation in Europe: in both, the problem is the defense of the rimlands and offshore islands against expansionist pressures from inside Eurasia. Peninsular war is thus the continuing strategic problem of our time, whether in the large as in Europe or in miniature as in Korea. The landing in the rear has become the standard counter of the maritime powers. As Gallipoli, North Africa, Inchon, and the current importance of the Middle East all testify, we have taken the advice of the Psalmist (78:66) to smite our enemies in the hinder parts and put them to perpetual reproach.

Here, then, is one major change in the nature of seapower: it has become conservative rather than revolutionary, defensive rather than offensive, concerned not with expansion but with compression.

In addition to this change in the nature of its employment, there have also, quite obviously, been great changes in capabilities and methods since Nelson was the embodiment of British seapower. What the exercise of seapower really boils down to, I suppose, is a special case of movement control, movement control confined to wet areas. This is sufficiently important, however, for it is hard to think of any human activity that does not involve the movement either of tangible or intangible goods.

In the days of the classical exercise of seapower, the state of military technology was such as to emphasize this capability of movement control at sea. The process was, as has been frequently been observed, a monopolistic one. Once control of the sea had been won by destruction or containment of the enemy, you had it and he didn't. It was an economical business, granting the success of the original investment. Unlike the state of affairs on land, further argument was unlikely to be very important. The situation was comparatively easy to maintain. But it is easy to maintain no longer: you can destroy the enemy's battle fleet, if he has one, but you may still be pretty certain of harassment

from above and below. The battles are no longer on the surface, but in the air, on the beaches, and along the convoy lanes. Naval operations have replaced naval actions.

Control of the sea was formerly monopolistic in another sense, in that control of movement along the surface of the oceans meant control of most of the traffic that really mattered. But autarchy has diminished dependence on imports; the airplane can move important categories of goods above the seas; the development of roads, canals, railroads, and trucking have made land transport approximate that in a fluid medium. The result of this equalization is that the maritime world is threatened by tyrants from progressively increasing distances — first Napoleon, then Hitler, then Stalin.

Control of the seas formerly meant control of the movement not only of goods but of persons and of information. The colonies had their troubles communicating with France during the Revolution and Benjamin Franklin was almost pulled in by a British cruiser while enroute to the court of Versailles. The Confederacy had similar problems, as shown by the capture of the envoys Mason and Slidell by a Union frigate. But when in the First World War the British, as part of their organization of the blockade, fished up the cables from the ocean floor, they found that radiotelegraphy had progressed to such a point as considerably to diminish the utility of the enterprise. Today, the airwaves around the world are made hideous around the clock by competing propagandas which no naval officer can intercept except in the communicator's technical sense of the word.

In various ways, then, the exercise of seapower is of more limited effect than once it was. The monopoly situation is over and free competition is the order of the day. It cannot be said, if indeed it ever could, that the exercise of seapower is the monopoly of the navy. When you send the big bombers, or the missiles, against the shipyards, or the submarine pens, or against ships at sea, you are involved in the exercise of seapower. When you

send them against land transport targets, you are attempting to impose a kind of movement control which was formerly peculiar to sea warfare. In the other direction the situation is altered by the ability of naval air to reach inland with gifts from the sea. Nobody is monopolistic. The efforts to spell out service missions are less exercises in logic than in diplomacy. The inevitable and necessary result of all this intermingling is the establishment of joint commands for the control not of surface areas but of three-dimensional boxes, partly wet, partly dry, and generally airy.

The exercise of seapower has thus changed, since the period analyzed by Mahan, both in its aims and in its methods. These change in themselves are enough to pose grave problems and to complicate immensely the process of reaching simple and intellectually elegant solutions of the old-fashioned sort. Of course it has always been easier to write history than to make it, and one should be sympathetic to those who have had to face the distressing problems of innovation — with the shipwrights, for example, forced to accustom themselves to work first in Noah's gopher wood, then in pine and live oak, then with rivets, then with welding. But how much more difficult this kind of thing becomes in the face of the phenomenal technological advances of the past decade, which bring with them uncertainties of the greatest magnitude. Who now can feel confident in his ability to predict the course of conflict? Wise men in the past, with far more manipulable data, made notable errors. Who is wise enough today to hazard a guess, let alone an opinion, firm enough to serve as a base for policy?

For ten years now, ever since the end of the war, the military services have been in a rather unenviable position with regard to the fundamental problems of just what their functions are, and of how to plan for the implementation of national policy. They have had to face up to these questions, which are in no sense easy ones, in a period of high-speed political and technological change,

and while operating under the pressures of semi-mobilization and with only semi-permanent personnel. National policy, furthermore, has not always been as clearly articulated as would be the case in the best of all possible worlds. It is therefore no wonder that the results have at times been somewhat less than reassuring, as harassed planners vibrated between the lessons of history (there has always been a horse calvary so we will always need one), and the predictable simplicities of weapon performance (this gadget will flatten an area the size of Texas, so three dozen of these will solve our troubles). But what do you do with the horses if you fight in an oatless area? Or with the gadgets if war breaks out in Lichtenstein?

The postwar ructions in the Defense Department reflected these puzzles in the rethinking of roles and procedures. In some ways, I think, the process was hardest for the Navy. The Army had gone through its period of rethinking in the late thirties, when it fought its way out of the concept of hemisphere defense. Then, with its dominantly ETO experience, it could fall in naturally with the new policy of coalition, containment, and the defense of Europe. The Air Force, enjoying its original monopoly of the new weapon, was enabled to renew and strengthen its promises of quick strategic war. But the Navy, with its dominantly Pacific experience and with Pacific veterans in the top positions, found itself less well-equipped to meet the new situation and, for a time, on the defensive in inter-service matters.

For the Pacific War, while it was a pretty good war as they go, is not, I think, a very fruitful source of doctrine for the present. It was, in effect, a unique type of pure maritime conflict, a war of time and distance and weapons effects only, war so to speak of the maneuvering board. There were no problems with allies, unless you include in this category the CinC SWPacific. There were no administrative and ideological problems arising from captured territories and subject or liberated populations. There were no unscalable mountains and no impassable

deserts. All that had to be done was to get the stuff out there and then use it to slap the Jap. In all these respects the Pacific war was about as unlike our subsequent troubles as could possibly be imagined, and furthermore the weapons systems which had proved most useful in the Pacific were not at first suited to attack on the heartland enemy.

The strategic uncertainties of recent years have necessarily been of great concern to those involved in naval planning and naval operations, as well as those forced to consider the meaning, if any, of seapower. But the problems involved in linking up armed force and policy are in no sense peculiar to the Navy. Strategic thinking and planning today are joint, not separate, whether in Washington or in Naval Warfare II. Indeed, some of the factors which have historically been peculiar to seapower are now of concern to those in the other services. I have mentioned that the development, for example, of land transport and of air warfare has made it both desirable and possible to attempt to impose in land theaters somewhat the same kind of movement control previously imposed by fleets at sea. Of even more importance, perhaps, is some way to recover the gradualism which was such a notable characteristic of seapower in the monopolistic days. It is useful to have an instrument of policy with which pressure can be built up and reduced in controlled fashion, but where do we find it today?

One of the reasons why these problems do not yield easily is perhaps a certain lack of flexibility on our part, a difficulty in anticipating or in promptly replying to other people's initiatives. Some of this, no doubt, flows naturally from the shift in direction of policy of the seapowers from one of remodeling the world to one of conserving it in something like its present state. Conservatives, it has been said, are often right but rarely imaginative. The defensive is a dull business. Under pressure and given time we can work out a policy and run along with it pretty well, but new demands are painful.

Another trouble, this time related to the speed of change both in political affairs and in technology, is a prevalence of pattern thinking. Where so much is uncertain all certainty seems precious, and if there isn't enough of it around it is human to invent some. But the invented constants may not always be useful. For example:

There is the tendancy to think in terms of war and peace, or hot and cold war, as if these were really distinguishable states. The distinction is, of course, absolute in law, but in fact it is comparative, and this is particularly plain, historically, in maritime matters. Maneuvering and engaging are parts of one whole, or ought to be. The risk in differentiating is that the idea becomes current that policy governs only until "hot war" begins, at which time it is locked up in the safe, or thrown out the porthole, as an unnecessary distraction from the more important business of laying the ship alongside and fighting for a "victory" undefined in meaningful terms. This is particularly hazardous in a period when there are strategic implications in single weapons and when one can envisage a situation in which policy, strategy, and postwar planning are all determined by the single act of target selection.

There is the comforting, or at least stabilizing, belief that there exists a long-term Communist plan for world conquest. Fascination with this improbable irrelevency is dangerous for two reasons. First, it tends to lead to a surrender of the initiative at the very start. Second, it leads to the neglect of ascertainable capabilities in favor of presumably known intentions, and the sad history of intentions planning is written large through recent history.

There is the tendency to feel that the enemy's strategy can be discovered by a quick glance in the mirror. Thus: we have worked hard to set up NATO; this means Europe is important; therefore, the Soviets are planning to march westward to the

Atlantic. Now the Russians are not very smart, but even thickest quarterback will try a pass if he is stopped at the li of scrimmage all afternoon. What was most disconcerting about the recent forward pass into Egypt was not that it was thrown but the bemused horror of the secondary defenses.

How much truth there is in this argument, how important these factors are, of this you must be the judges. But if strategic thinking is at times confused, if ends are confounded with means, if we find ourselves forced always to reply to the initiatives of someone else, if the word "seapower" seems sometimes more ritualistic than meaningful, we should try to find a way out. Often, in such an impasse, when things seem most hopeless, the way out is gained if one tries to reformulate the problem and to approach it from a different angle. It may even be that if we try this we will find that Mahan has something to teach us still.

The first thing to note is the essential flexibility of seapower, the wide possibilities of choice that are open to the dominant maritime groups if only they are willing to perceive and to act upon them. This is one point I do not think we need argue in detail. Whatever the precise nature of the factors which have brought this about — the physics of a fluid medium, factors of location economics, phenomena of meteorology and history, the course of the development of international law — the fact itself will hardly be seriously disputed. If you control the seas you control economic processes of great importance and, at the same time, you have at your disposal the one "legal" and effective way of going from here to there, and of deploying in the vicinity of "there" without aggressing. Perhaps in all honesty this should be qualified by saying that this was the only effective way of thus showing the flag prior to the new custom adopted by certain heads of state of junketing around and making ill-mannered speeches; but if Messrs. Kruschev and Bulganin are now providing competition, they are at least emphasizing the virtue of this capability. This is seapower on the cheap.

This flexibility of seapower, it should be noted, has existed both in the present and through time, not only on the immediate tactical level but in historically very different circumstances, not only in war but in peace. Control of the sea has given its possessors the option of landing at X or at Y, as seemed preferable. It has also permitted them to live and prosper in very different environments. The monopolistic virtues of seapower were very handy things during the European scramble for overseas empire. Its adaptability to coalition policies has been of great benefit to us in recent times.

The British story is in large measure that of the shift from splendid isolation, an English term meaning go-it-alone, to coalition policy. The British got their empire and except for the loss of the thirteen colonies they kept it by the same instrument, control of the sea, but the instrument was employed in different ways. They got it as the result of some excellent sea fights but keeping it was another thing, and it can certainly be argued that the most peaceful century of British seapower, the nineteenth, was also the most successful.

It was, furthermore, a Briton — Eyre Crowe — who first pointed out that once the empty places had been preempted and the world filled up with sovereign states the nature of seapower was such as to induce the dominant nation to tailor its policy in the general interest so as not to find itself faced with an overwhelming hostile coalition. "General interest" in this context means on behalf of the independence and self-determination of states, and against the would-be conqueror. For Americans this is a welcome thing in view of our deeply ingrained faith in a cooperative world order and in the universal validity of the principles for which we fought our own War of Independence. It is also a good thing for the general interest, which might otherwise be in the position of finding itself without any very important friends.

Now I said earlier that seapower is difficult to define, and that its practice in anything like the sense given it by Mahan

is impossible, both because of the reorientation of policy of the maritime states and because of technological change. Yet here we are talking about its sovereign virtues again in the old Indian remedy terms. This is not wholly an accident. It illustrates one great truth about seapower for those who have the sea around them; namely, that they are stuck with it. It also may help us to reach, if not a definition, at least an understanding of the phenomenon.

Because seapower is more than geography and character of the population and sound institutions and natural resources and so on. What Mahan was really writing about was the product not only of a national state but of a state of mind, not just the capabilities but a deep and almost instinctive appreciation of the possibilities inherent in them, and an ability to employ them without self-imposed rigidities and limitations. You cannot ordain seapower. In the First Book of Kings (9:26-28) we read that Solomon built a navy, but that when it came to manning it he had to borrow crews from Hiram, King of Tyre, "shipmen that had knowledge of the sea." To do these things well you have to be doing what comes naturally.

We may ask at this point whether in this sense the United States is a seapower? The answer, I guess, is yes, to a certain extent.

One of the traditional virtues in control and exploitation of the seas is that you can accomplish a lot in fairly economical terms, so far as blood and treasure are concerned. This we have done and are doing. In the more or less peaceful war in which we have been engaged for the past ten years the nation and the Navy have already accomplished their first great task. The armies which previously had to be pushed through the submarine zone and over the beaches of Europe have once again been pushed through. The Western Front is stabilized; the time is now, if you please, 1918 or 1944. That this movement was not resisted by force is, I take it, a triumph of policy. We have learned one thing

at least about the use of the seas, and that is that it is easier if you get started in good time.

Logistically, too, we are through the first phase of the campaign. The war so far has been largely one of logistics maneuver, of projection by sea from the continental base of airstrips, port facilities, supplies of POL and the like, and their positioning and support. I said earlier that I didn't think the Pacific War a very good source of contemporary lessons, but there is perhaps an exception to this in its demonstration that a campaign confined to the realm of logistics is more predictable and controllable than one which involves fleet action. Battles rarely go according to plan; base development sometimes does. Thus, Proverbs 21:31: "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord." Here again, I think we can say that our use of the seas is sound, the more so perhaps since while it is a serious business to risk a fleet it is even more so to risk the cities of western civilization.

But if the Western Front is stabilized, where do we go from here? Can we decide, or must others decide for us? This is a problem of exploiting the flexibility which seapower gives: economy of force, the possibility of indirect approaches which afford leverage and control but obviate the brutal business of conquest, the opportunity to buy them rather than to beat them. And here the record is not perhaps so good: we find ourselves fixed, our lines frozen, our initiative lacking, in part from our own inability to appreciate opportunity.

I said earlier that one of the great changes in the exercise of seapower was the change to the defensive. But if a history of conservatism stifles the initiative we should watch out. The 19th century may have been the most successful century of British seapower, but it ended with an awful bang in 1914. Behind the peaceful facade the world had walked right out from under the British international structure. Surely the lesson here is that

since change is inevitable we should try to guide it rather than await a a new Sarajevo.

The Russians, we observe, have begun to use a bargain basement kind of seapower. Khrushchev goes on the road; promises fly; arms are shipped to Egypt. With the world formally at peace visit and search is not the answer. The alternative to steering an intercepting course is to put on more turns. This means resuming the offensive, and why not? Why not try to change the world, the more so since the changes we wish to see call not for conquest and dominion, but for leveling up, for teaching and sharing, for a stabilized and cooperative international society.

In this context, we should note one final major historic change which affects the nature and possibilities of seapower. Mahan's seapower was the product of a world of scarcity, where wealth derived primarily from commercial exchange. It was thus necessary to grab for control and to fight to maintain it. And since trade dominance meant dominant wealth, Britain, as the successful practitioner, could develop a major policy weapon out of her ability to subsidize continental allies.

But now, for the first time in history, we are approaching a world of abundance. Production on a massive scale has been added to exchange as the basis of economic power. The gold and silver, the ivory, apes, and peacocks which Solomon's navy brought from afar are now synthesized in Detroit and Pittsburg, and in the valleys of the Columbia and Tennessee. Where the British anciently bought rulers with gold, we have a larger capability: we can buy peoples with goods. And only we, for the moment at any rate, can do this.

So once again the question: with the Western Front stabilized, what next? And here I would like to comment very briefly on two troubled areas which everybody knows are troubled but which, if you cut to the heart of the matter, should not present

very difficult problems to those who, possessing the greatest productive machine in history, rule the sea and propose to use it.

The first is of course the Middle East. This is the new Gallipoli, or North Africa, the flanking area of our expanded theater of operations. Seen from the sea it has certain advantages: it is easy to sail to the southern shores; it is hard to walk into from the north. The population is sparse, which gives room for maneuver both economic and military. Unlike Gallipoli Peninsula or Morocco, however, it is an area of transcendent importance on its own account, because of its oil. In a sense the control of this area is very nearly equivalent to the control of industrial Western Europe. Why then have we been so backward here? So harried by Mossadegh, so alarmed by the Czechoslovakian jets, so ungraceful about the Aswam Dam? To any western statesman thinking in maritime terms, a policy of initiative in this area would seem to be a must. Here is one place to go.

The second area is the Far East. Here again it would seem we have become the prisoners of our own rigidities, and have helped to keep others imprisoned in theirs. Where everything should have been done to pry the Chinese loose from the Russians, we have done all we could to bind them together. This is not to say the problem is in practice an easy one, but since we are talking the theory of seapower and have thus the theorists' privilege of keeping things simple, I think we should remind ourselves that here, if anywhere, the sea retains its ancient virtues. The quick way to see the direction policy should take, from the point of view of both parties, is to compare the carrying capacity of the Pacific Ocean with that of the Trans-Siberian railroad.

It would seem that anyone thinking along the lines of the maritime strategic tradition would argue this way, and yet even naval officers have talked in terms of fighting rather than buying the Chinese. The Chinese, needless to say, have talked back. This is the kind of problem one gets when one translates the striking

force mentality into the realms of policy. We need striking forces, but we need policy, too, and the tension between these different demands is just one of the tensions which the current state of the world imposes on the military man.

This, indeed, is what strikes the outsider who sits down to think about strategy most forcibly, the formidable demands which the present situation makes of naval officers and of the military in general. They must be highly competent in their specialized duties. They have to have at least an administrator's acquaintance with most of the fields of human knowledge. They can call on, and must wisely use, specialists in all areas of human life. Hoping always for peace and yet ready to fight on a moment's notice, they must conduct a war of maneuver in order to prevent a war of bombardment. In what other field of endeavor, with the possible exception of matrimony, is man faced with such problems?

Still, the greater the challenge the greater the reward that comes with its mastery. The need for the understanding and wise use of seapower is a great challenge, particularly for naval officers but in an important sense for us all. Weapons and techniques may change. The responsibilities may be collectivized, and shared with aviators and diplomats and economists. The events of day to day may seem an endless series of harassments and distractions. Nevertheless, if you lift your sights it becomes plain that those concerned with exploitation of the wet areas will be in business for a long time. Seapower is a long-term thing. It begins long before the bombers take off. It is what permits the bombers to fly. It is inevitably deeply involved in picking up the pieces. If it is properly handled it may prevent the bombers ever being called on.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

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Professor Field attended Harvard University, where he received his B. S., A. M., and Ph. D. degrees, and also attended Cambridge University, England, in 1937-1938.

In 1939-1941, and again in 1947, he was a Teaching Fellow and Tutor in the Department of History and Literature at Harvard University. During World War II, he served with the United States Navy from 1942 to 1946. His wartime assignments included duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, on an escort carrier in the Pacific area, as gunnery officer of Carrier Division 23, and on the Staff of Commander Air Force, United States Atlantic Fleet.

Doctor Field is Professor of American History at Swarthmore College. He occupied the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History at the Naval War College during the 1954-1955 academic year.

As a member of the Navy Analysis Division, USSBS, he collaborated in the preparation of *Interrogations of Japanese Officials* and *Campaigns of the Pacific War*. He is the author of the *Japanese at Leyte Gulf*, and the translator of R. de Belot's *Struggle for the Mediterranean*.